

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace the following numbered paragraphs with the following rewritten paragraphs:

- [2] There is an increasing demand for the use of hybrid electric driven and hybrid electric assisted vehicles. Hybrid electric vehicles typically utilize electric motor driven axles which are often of a multi-axle configuration in military and specialty ~~vehicles~~ vehicle systems.
- [6] ~~In one embodiment, the~~ The electric motors drive the gearbox assembly which includes a first stage gear reduction, a second stage gear reduction and a third stage gear reduction. The third stage gear reduction is preferably a two-speed reduction gear set that includes a differential gear set substantially contained within the two-speed reduction gear set. A relatively lightweight and compact axle assembly is thereby provided which will benefit from an electric motor of reduced size.
- [7] Another axle assembly ~~provides a third stage gear reduction which~~ includes a single speed electric carrier with two motors. Yet another axle assembly utilizes only a single electric motor for yet another vehicle configuration without major modification to the axle assembly.
- [15] A multiple of axle assemblies 20 each includes an axle 22 driven by one or more electric motors 24. Each axle assembly 20 defines an axis of rotation D substantially transverse the longitudinal members 16 to drive one or more ~~wheels~~ wheel assemblies 26 supported by a suspension assembly 27 (illustrated schematically). The electric motors 24 are driven by a prime mover 28 which is preferably a hybrid electric drive which powers each of the axle assemblies 20 by powering the electric motors 24. It should be understood, however, that other prime movers such as diesel engines, gas turbines among others will also benefit from the present invention.
- [16] Referring to Figure 2, a first and a second electric motors 24a, 24b drive a gearbox assembly 30 which drives the wheels 26 through a first axle shaft 32a and a second axle shaft 32b located along axis D and contained with an axle housing 34a, 34b. The electric motors 24a, 24b are located along axes DE1 and DE2 which are substantially transverse to

axis D. The electric motors 24a, 24b drive the gearbox assembly 30 which includes a first stage gear reduction 36, a second stage gear reduction 38 and a ~~third stage gear reduction differential~~ 40.

[20] ~~In the example shown in Figure 2, the~~ The hollow ring gear 58 drives the ~~a third stage gear reduction 4045~~ through an input side gear 62a which is coaxial with axis D. That is, the hollow ring gear 58 is mounted to the input side gear 62a for rotation therewith.

[21] The third stage gear reduction ~~4045~~ is preferably a two-speed reduction gear set 64 that includes ~~the differential gear set 6640, which is~~ substantially contained within the two-speed reduction gear set 64, ~~and~~ which drives a first differential axle side gear 68a mounted to the first axle shaft 32a and a second differential axle side gear 68b which drives the second axle shaft 32b.

[22] The differential ~~gear set 6640~~ is preferably nested within the two-speed reduction gear set 64. For further understanding of other aspects of the third stage gear reduction ~~4045~~ and associated components thereof, attention is directed to United States Patent Application No. ~~10/~~_____ (Express Mail No. EV221419178US) ~~6,843,750, issued January 18, 2005,~~ entitled TWO-SPEED GEARBOX WITH INTEGRATED DIFFERENTIAL, which is assigned to the assignee of the instant invention and which is hereby incorporated herein in its entirety. A relatively lightweight and compact axle assembly is thereby provided which will benefit from an electric motor of reduced size.

[23] Referring to Figure 3, an axle assembly 20' provides a ~~third stage gear reduction differential 40'~~ which ~~includes~~for a single speed electric carrier that otherwise operates as ~~described~~described with reference to the Figure 2 two-speed electric carrier, ~~except that the~~. The hollow ring gear 58 drives a single speed electric carrier 59 of which is coaxial with axis D. That is, the hollow ring gear 58 is mounted to the ~~third stage gear reduction differential 40'~~ for rotation therewith. The single speed electric ~~third stage gear reduction 40' carrier~~ is particularly preferred for a vehicle which, for example only, is of a lighter weight or which requires less off-road capability.